DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 183 TM 009 616

TITLE	Degrees of Reading Power. Form A. Directions for Administering and Scoring. New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading.
INSTITUTION	New York State Education Dept., Albany.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	15p.; New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading, Form A was removed prior to submission to the ERIC Document Reproduction Service; For related document, see TM 009 617
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Complexity Level; Elementary Secondary Education; *Minimum Competency Testing; Reading Achievement; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Level; *Reading Tests; Scoring; Screening Tests; State Programs; *State Standards; *Student Testing; Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS	New York; *New York State Preliminary Competency Test Reading

ABSTRACT

The New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading is designed to measure a student's ability to understand written material of varying levels of difficulty. Results are used to evaluate a student's current level of achievement in reading and to indicate the extent of compensatory or remedial help which may be necessary to pass the final Regents competency test in reading. Only instructions for administering and scoring the test are contained in this booklet. The test consists of non-fiction prose passages, each approximately 300 words long, arranged in increasing order of difficulty and covering randomly selected topics. The test consists of 98 items and is untimed. Students' scores are the number of questions answered correctly; there is no penalty for wrong answers. Answer sheets may be scored either by hand or machine. (Author/MH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Miller

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

NEW YORK STATE

PRELIMINARY COMPETENCY TEST IN

READING

DEGREES OF READING POWER

FORM A

ED177183

TM009 616

Directions for Administering and Scoring

Copyright 1979
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12234

DET 361 (3-79-60,000)

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University (*with years when terms expire*)

1981 Theodore M. Black, A.B., Litt.D., LL.D., Pd.D., D.C.L., L.H.D. *Chancellor*----------Sands Point

1988 Willard A. Genrich, LL.B., L.H.D., LL.D. *Vice Chancellor*----------Buffalo

1986 Kenneth B. Clark, A.B., M.S., Ph.D., LL.D., L.H.D., D.Sc.----------Hastings on Hudson

1983 Harold E. Newcomb, B.A.----------Oswego

1982 Emlyn I. Griffith, A.B., J.D.----------Rome

1983 Mary Alice Kendall, B.S.----------Rochester

1984 Jorge L. Batista, B.A., J.D., LL.D.----------Bronx

1982 Louis E. Yavner, LL.B.----------New York

1979 Laura Bradley Chodos, B.A., M.A.----------Vischer Ferry

1980 Martin C. Barell, B.A., I.A., LL.B.----------Kings Point

1981 Joseph R. Bongiorno, B.S., M.D.----------Brooklyn

1984 Louise P. Matteoni, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.----------Bayside

1981 J. Edward Meyer, B.A., LL.B.----------Armonk

1985 Arlene B. Reed-Delaney, B.A., M.D.----------Albany

1987 R. Carlos Carballada, B.S.----------Arcade

President of The University and Commissioner of Education
GORDON M. AMBACH

Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education
JOSEPH J. BLANEY

Deputy Commissioner for Elementary, Secondary and Continuing Education
ROBERT R. SPILLANE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Description of the Test	
Purpose	1
General Features of the Test	1
Administering and Scoring the Test	
The Test Materials	3
Special Considerations for Assuring Optimal Student Performance	3
Test Administration Time	4
Preparations for Testing	4
Detailed Directions for Administering the Test	6
Directions for Scoring	10
Appendix	
List of Correct Answers - Form A	11

In addition to this manual, two other publications concerning the New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading are available from the Division of Educational Testing:

Manual for Administrators and Teachers

Degrees of Reading Power: A Brief Technical Description

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST

Purpose

The New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading is designed to measure a student's ability to understand written material of varying levels of difficulty. The results of this test are intended for use in evaluating a student's current level of achievement in reading and as an indicator of the extent of compensatory or remedial help, if any, that a student may need in order to achieve success on the final Regents competency test in reading.

This publication contains only the instructions for administering and scoring the preliminary competency test in reading. The manual for administrators and teachers contains a description of the Regents Competency Testing Program and extensive information about how the scores on the preliminary competency test in reading can be used to improve students' reading skills. There is also a separate publication that provides a technical description of the Degrees of Reading Power technology used in the preliminary competency test in reading.

General Features of the Test

The preliminary competency test in reading consists of nonfiction prose passages on a variety of randomly selected topics. Each passage contains about 300 words. The passages are arranged in order of difficulty, beginning with very easy material and progressing to very difficult material. Test items are formed by the deletion of seven words in each passage. Each deleted word is indicated by an underlined blank space. For each deletion, five single-word response options are provided. Students are required to read the text and select the word that most appropriately fits the blank. There are a total of 98 test items.

The test items are designed so that the text of the passage must be read and understood in order for the student to respond correctly. All of the response options "fit" the blank space; each one makes a grammatically correct and logically plausible

sentence if the sentence is considered in isolation. However, only one response "fits" or is plausible when the surrounding context of the passage is considered. Thus, the selection of the correct response depends upon understanding the prose in the surrounding text. The student should be able to respond correctly to all (or nearly all) items in the test up to the point where he or she cannot understand a passage sufficiently well to decide which word is the correct choice.

The deleted words and the other response options are words that are in common use and are of uniform difficulty throughout the test. Thus the test items become more difficult only with respect to the difficulty of the text in the passages. The response options are maintained at an easy, constant level because the test is intended as a measure of the ability to comprehend prose, not as a vocabulary test. In addition, all of the information that is needed to select the correct response is provided in the text of the passages; there is no need to supply information concerning each passage's content from memory or past experience.

ADMINISTERING AND SCORING THE TEST

The Test Materials

The test materials provided by the Department include the test booklet, an NCS answer sheet (hand- or machine-scorable), a hand-scoring stencil, the directions for administering and scoring, a manual for administrators and teachers, and a technical description.

The NCS answer sheet may be hand scored using the stencil provided, or may be machine scored. For purposes of machine processing, several grids containing spaces for recording various types of student identification information have been included on the answer sheet. If the answer sheets are to be machine scored, it is essential that uniform written instructions about the completion of these grids be developed by the school and provided to all examiners administering the test. Such instructions should be based upon careful consideration of the types of student and score information the school needs to have, as well as upon the processing requirements of the scoring center which the school is using.

Special Considerations for Assuring Optimal Student Performance

If the test results are to provide an accurate measure of each student's reading ability, the directions for administering the test should be followed carefully. The person administering the test should review the directions beforehand and become thoroughly familiar with them.

Because the passages in the preliminary competency test in reading are graduated in difficulty and because students vary in their reading ability, some of the difficult passages will be relatively easy for the most capable students. Conversely, even the easiest passages will be demanding and possibly frustrating for students with limited reading ability. Since the purpose of the test is to obtain the most accurate estimate possible of a student's reading ability, it is essential that students be

guided to approach the test in such a manner as to assure optimal performance. As indicated in the directions in the test booklet, it is more important for a student to answer correctly the questions on the passages he or she can read than to try to read all of the passages. Therefore, students should be encouraged to read as many passages and answer as many questions as they can; however, students should be discouraged from wild guessing, from efforts to finish the test at all costs, and from marking answers on the answer sheet for passages that are much beyond their comprehension level.

Of course, students should be given no help in understanding the test questions. They should be advised to answer the questions according to their best judgment. However, the examiner should give students all the assistance required in such mechanics as filling out the heading of the answer sheet and recording the answers.

Test Administration Time

The preliminary competency test in reading is untimed and students are to be given as much time as they need to answer as many questions as they can. As a general rule, most students will need about one hour of working time; in addition, approximately 15 minutes will be necessary for the examiner to provide instructions to the students. Therefore, schools should schedule at least 1½ hours for the test administration. However, some students may need more working time for the test, and schools should make provisions to accommodate such students.

Preparation for Testing

Although special arrangements may be needed for administering the test to large groups of students, these arrangements should interfere as little as possible with the normal school routine. A number of points should be taken into consideration when making arrangements for the testing session.

1. Selecting the Testing Room - If a room other than the regular classroom is to be used, attention should be

given to lighting, ventilation, and absence of noise and other distractions.

2. Scheduling the Test - The test should be scheduled, if possible, on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. The test should not be scheduled immediately after a period of strenuous physical exercise.

3. Orientation of Students - Any announcements informing students about the test before the test administration should be made in such a way as to increase the students' interest in the test and at the same time not cause them to become overly anxious and tense. They should be told that no special preparation is necessary and that the test measures reading skills which they use every day in and out of school.

4. Assembling the Test Materials - The following materials are needed for this test. The materials should be assembled at least 1 day before the test administration.

   For each student:

   - test booklet
   - NCS answer sheet
   - No. 2½ or softer lead pencil

   For the examiner:

   - directions for administering and scoring
   - test booklet (for demonstration purposes)
   - NCS answer sheet (for demonstration purposes)
   - instructions for completing the student identification grids on the NCS answer sheet (provided by the school if the answer sheets are to be machine scored)
   - extra answer sheets and pencils

DETAILED DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE TEST

Make sure that sufficient quantities of all test materials are at hand. Each student should have a No. 2½ or softer lead pencil and the desks should be cleared of books and papers. When the students are ready to begin the test, say:

> The test you are about to take is a new type of reading test. It is not a timed test. You will be given as much time as you need.
>
> I will now give out the answer sheets. Do not write on the answer sheets until I tell you what to do.

Distribute the answer sheets. Then give complete directions about the completion of the heading. If the answer sheets are to be machine scored, provide directions about the marking of any machine-readable name or number grids.

After these directions have been given and the students have provided the information requested on their answer sheets, distribute one test booklet, face up, to each student and say:

> Please leave the test booklet face up on your desk. Do not open the booklet until I am ready to read through the directions with you.

After every student has received a test booklet, say:

> Look at the cover of your test booklet. Read the section called "To the Student" to yourself while I read it aloud.
>
> "To the Student
>
> This is a test to find out how well you read. Do your best to read the passages and answer the questions. Work carefully and do not rush. You will be given as much time as you need."

Now, open your test booklet to page 2. Read the directions to yourself while I read them aloud.

"Directions

This test contains several reading passages. In each passage some words are missing. Wherever a word is missing, there is a blank line with a number on it. Next to the passage you will find the same number and five words. Choose the word that makes the best sense in the blank.

On your answer sheet, find the same number as the blank. Fill in the circle that has the same letter as the word you have chosen. Mark only one answer for each question. If you want to change an answer, be sure to erase your first mark completely. Then mark the answer you want.

Find Samples I and II on your answer sheet. Read Sample I below and see how the right answer has been marked on your answer sheet. Then read Sample II and mark the answer on your answer sheet."

I will wait while you work on these two samples.

Do not read the samples aloud. Allow students time to do both sample questions themselves. Then say:

"Look at the answer for Sample I. The circle for letter d is marked because the word weather makes the best sense in the blank.

In Sample II you should have marked the circle for letter a because the word rain is the word that makes the best sense in the blank.

As you can see, you may not be sure of the answer to a question until you have read the sentences that come after the blank. So be sure to read enough to answer the questions.

You are not expected to read at the same speed as other people or to answer the same number of questions. As you work on this test, you will find that the passages become harder to read. Do your best to read as many passages as you can and to answer as many questions as you can.

You will be given as much time as you need. Be sure to spend your time on what you can read rather than on what is too hard for you. It is more important to get the answers right for the passages you can read than it is to try to read all the passages on this test.

> Remember, mark all your answers on the separate answer sheet, and mark only one answer for each question."
>
> Do you have any questions? Do you know how to mark the answer sheet?

If students do not understand the sample questions or the marking of the answer sheet, the appropriate directions may be explained until everyone knows what to do. After all questions have been answered, say:

> When you are finished working on the test, close your booklet and place it on top of your answer sheet. Do you have any questions? Now, turn the page and begin work.

If the test is administered in a regular classroom situation, when students finish their tests, they should remain quietly at their desks and be allowed to work on other assignments. The examiner may collect the test materials either as students complete the test or when most of the students have finished.

If the test is administered in a large group situation, schools may prefer to allow students to hand in their test materials as they finish and then leave the room. If so, care should be taken that students leave the room as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the students who are still working on the test.

DIRECTIONS FOR SCORING

The student's score on the New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading is the number of questions which the student answers correctly. There is no penalty for wrong answers.

The NCS answer sheets may be either hand or machine scored. A list of correct answers is provided in the appendix.

A stencil is provided for hand scoring. On the stencil, boxes have been printed to indicate correct answers; when the stencil is aligned properly with the answer sheet, each correct answer will be visible in a box.

If the answer sheets are hand scored, the following procedure should be used:

1. Scan each answer sheet to make certain that the student has not marked two or more answers for a question. If a student has marked two or more answers, draw a horizontal line with colored pencil through all the answer spaces, so that no credit will be allowed for that question in scoring.
2. Place the scoring stencil on the answer sheet. Be sure the stencil is correctly aligned so that the boxes correspond to the correct answers.
3. To obtain the total raw score, count the number of correct answers. Omit any answer through which a colored line was drawn in scanning. Place the total raw score in the box provided on the answer sheet.

The raw scores may be converted into DRP units through the use of a conversion table provided in the manual for administrators and teachers.

APPENDIX

LIST OF CORRECT ANSWERS

New York State Preliminary Competency Test in Reading Form A was removed prior to submission to the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.